

# Home Inspections: Top Ten Problems



Each homebuyer has different ideas of what will constitute the ideal home for them, often based on aesthetic preferences. But one thing that unites all potential homebuyers is the desire to find a home that is fundamentally sound - beyond just what the eye can see - and that provides a safe, comfortable, and efficient foundation for their new life.

This is where the services of a home inspector come in. During an inspection, at least 30 areas of the home are examined. Below are the ten most common weaknesses found during a typical home inspection. If not addressed, these issues could become costly. Knowing what to look for - and doing your own pre-inspection - can help identify areas needing repair before they become major problems.

## 1. Damp Basement

Mildew odour is often the first sign of basement dampness. Inspectors will also look for mineral deposits on the walls near the floor and ask whether items are confidently stored on the floor. Repair costs can be significant and affect your home's value.

## 2. Poorly Installed or Defective Plumbing

Common in older homes, plumbing defects include leaks, clogs, and rusted pipes. Inspectors test water pressure and look for discoloured water, which may signal rust. Narrow pipes or corrosion should be addressed promptly.

## 3. Older or Poorly-Functioning Heating and Cooling Systems

Aging or neglected systems may pose health or safety risks. If your furnace is over 15-20 years old, replacement may be recommended. In forced air gas systems, the heat exchanger is checked for cracks due to carbon monoxide risk. Though expensive, upgrades can improve efficiency and lower utility costs.

## 4. Older or Unsafe Electrical System

Common issues include undersized service, aluminum or knob-and-tube wiring, and overloaded circuits.

Over-fused circuits pose fire hazards. Upgrading from a fuse panel to a breaker panel typically costs several hundred dollars.

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## 5. Older or Leaking Roof

Asphalt shingles generally last 15–20 years. Roof leaks may indicate aging or storm damage.

Check how many layers of shingles exist to determine if full replacement is necessary.

## 6. Minor Structural Problems

Cracked plaster or small foundation shifts are common in older homes. While not catastrophic, they should be repaired early to avoid escalation.

## 7. Poor Ventilation

Unvented bathrooms and kitchens can lead to mold and fungus, affecting air quality and causing allergic reactions or damage to plaster and windows. Proper ventilation should be installed to prevent these issues.

## 8. Air Leakage

Drafts may come from ill-fitting doors, poor attic sealing, worn weatherstripping, or aged caulking. These are generally easy and inexpensive fixes.

## 9. Security Features

Inspectors check for proper door/window locks and functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Radon tests are also conducted. If your home lacks any of these, consult an expert for upgrade costs.

## 10. Drainage and Grading Problems

One of the most common inspection issues. Poor drainage often leads to basement dampness. Fixes may include new gutters, downspouts, or regrading the lawn to divert water away from the house.



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